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AUTHOR Lane, Kenneth E.
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ABSTRACT

Louisiana has witnessed rapid change in the role and direction of educational administration programs and certification during the last 2 years. The state's LEAD program, begun in 1986-87 by the Louisiana State University in conjunction with other state universities, consists of a technical assistance network to help those principals with less than 5 years of experience improve their instruction leadership skills. Working closely with the beginning principals, Louisiana's four technical assistance centers help implement a school model to effectively define and solve key instructional problems. The model, called Consequence Analysis, is presented in a field manual guide that outlines performance objectives and contains supporting material. The program results in a strong networking organization for the principals and positive support by the superintendents of the principals in the program. Louisiana's successful LEAD project clearly indicates that when the professors of educational administration in a state have a vision of what needs to be done to help principals become more effective in their schools, change can be effected. That change in Louisiana now has the potential for greater positive growth for the state's principals and professors. (KM)

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Louisiana LEAD: Assessing Beginning Principal Performance

Presented by

Kenneth E. Lane

Kenneth E. Lane will be an Associate Professor in Educational Administration at California State University, San Bernardino, effective September, 1989. He previously served as Assistant Professor in Educational Administration at Southeastern Louisiana University.

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The State of Louisiana has seen rapid change in the role and direction of educational administration programs and certification during the past two years. This change is reflected by a growing interest in Louisiana LEAD as an induction model for beginning principals and assistant principals whereby they would serve a two year internship prior to receiving a five year renewal certification as an administrator. The focus of this paper is on describing Louisiana LEAD in an endeavor to provide a forum for dialogue of how further and better improvement may occur.

Louisiana LEAD

Louisiana LEAD had its beginnings in 1986-1987 when Louisiana State University in conjunction with other state universities submitted a proposal to the U.S. Department of Education for the purpose of enabling educational administration personnel in Louisiana universities to develop and implement a data driven field-based program whereby beginning principals could assess their needs and develop the skills necessary to meet those needs in order to have an effective school. Each state could submit numerous proposals but only one per state would be funded. Fortunately, the proposal submitted by LSU was funded. Louisiana LEAD is thus supported with matching funds from the U.S. Department of Education and the five participating universities through the LEAD program.

In Louisiana, the LEAD program consists of a technical assistance network to help principals with less than five years experience improve their instructional leadership skills. LSU provides technical assistance to four other universities in the state who in turn provide training and technical assistance to two cohorts of fifteen beginning principals in their respective regions. One cohort consists of first year participants while the second cohort consists of second year participants. Technical assistance centers are in operation at Northeast Louisiana University, Southeastern Louisiana University, University of Southwestern Louisiana and the University of New Orleans.

These four centers work closely with the beginning principals to implement a school model in their schools over the entire school year so

as to effectively define and solve key instructional problems. The model, called Consequence Analysis, is presented in a field manual guide outlining performance objectives and supporting material and by the center's director through modeling the behaviors of the principal in organizing the school committee.

As a starting point for the program, the technical assistance centers implement a comprehensive assessment of each principal's professional performance and school climate. The assessment process includes a diagnostic profile of each principal's performance and of each principal's ability to articulate and implement a vision of what the school can and ought to be. The data is generated from a set of instruments administered to the principal and to the teachers. The data generated presents comparisons of principal and teacher perceptions of principal performance and the school climate.

Focusing on the the diagnostic profiles derived from the assessment results, LEAD problem-solving seminars teach each participating principal how to direct a school-wide action committee in defining and solving key instructional problems. The principals then work with a committee of teachers and community members to implement the process. A network of 50 or more leaders from other college faculties, business and industry, government, the State Department of Education and professional associations has been developed to mentor principals individually or through group seminars. These seminars supplement the problem-solving seminars.

Successful completion of the problem-solving objectives is verified through the use of a triangulation interview procedure. Three interviews are conducted by the LEAD faculty--one with the school principal and two with members serving on the problem-solving committee. The three people are interviewed separately in order to provide a cross-checking of perspectives since they represent more than one organizational role.

Results of the program indicate a strong networking organization by the principals, positive support by the principals and positive support by the superintendents of the principals in the program. The fact that principals view LEAD as pertinent to their role suggests that the program activities and components are reasonably grounded in the "everyday" life of the school environment. LEAD is being recommended to peer principals which suggests a global, positive perception of the LEAD program as directed.

Two other positive perceptions have been voiced. The success of

the Louisiana LEAD program has given impetus to a study by the Deans of the Colleges of Education in Louisiana to seek funding for six additional centers. At a meeting in October, 1988, with the directors of the LEAD centers, the State Superintendent of Schools asked whether the LEAD model could be used as an induction program for school principals. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Schools in May, 1989, established as a part of the certification process for all principals and assistant principals a two year internship under the auspices of Project LEAD.

The success of Project LEAD in becoming a part of the certification process in the state of Louisiana rests in large measure on its ability to produce data indicating the changes needed in individual schools and by individual principals. It is a data driven two year internship which produces results. If it were not for this data base, the BESE board would never have implemented it as a part of the certification process.

The success of Project LEAD clearly indicates that where the professors in educational administration in a state have a vision of what needs to be done to help principals become more effective in their schools, change can be effected. That change now has the potential for greater positive growth for principals and professors.